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# BULLETIN OF THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

VOLUME VIII

NEW YORK, JUNE, 1913

NUMBER 6

## THE MORGAN COLLECTION

**A**S was announced in the daily papers of May 29, Mr. J. Pierpont Morgan has made known his intentions and desires regarding the preliminary disposition of the works of art sent by his father from Europe to this country last year. His formal announcement was made in the following letter addressed to the Trustees of the Museum:

May 27, 1913.

GENTLEMEN:

It is my desire that the objects of art left by my father should be exhibited for the benefit of the public as soon as may be. I know that it was in my father's mind to make a loan exhibition of them in the new south wing which is to be built, for which I understand that an appropriation has been assured by the Board of Estimate. A long time, however, must necessarily elapse before the construction of the new wing makes such an exhibition possible. I understand from various talks with Mr. Robinson that it is quite possible to arrange in the new northeast wing a temporary installation of the objects, which would be, while not of a final character, of great advantage to the people of New York, since it would enable them to see the things and get the benefit of them pending such final disposition as may be made of the objects under Mr. Morgan's

will. If it can be done, therefore, I should be glad to have the things shown at a loan exhibition to be opened some time early in the year 1914. I quite understand that the installation in the new northeast wing would be only temporary in character, and would not be as satisfactory as the more perfect arrangement which would be possible by waiting, but I am impressed with the fact that a delay of two years at least must occur if we decide to wait for the more perfect conditions, and it would be a pity to deprive the public for so long of an opportunity of seeing these objects.

Yours very truly,  
J. P. MORGAN.

To this letter Mr. Robert W. de Forest, Secretary of the Museum, replied as follows in behalf of the Trustees:

May 28, 1913.

J. P. MORGAN, ESQ.,

DEAR SIR:

We have your letter of the 27th instant, containing your generous offer of a loan exhibition of the objects of art left by the late Mr. J. Pierpont Morgan, at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, and shall be very glad to arrange for the temporary exhibition which you suggest.

We are sure that the public will be grateful for the opportunity of seeing them promptly and will ap-

prove our giving their exhibition precedence.

It is perfectly understood by us, and will be understood by the public, that this in no way commits you or the other executors of Mr. Morgan's estate to any course in regard to their ultimate disposition.

Yours very truly,  
ROBERT W. DE FOREST  
Secretary.

From Mr. Morgan's letter it is clear that he has not yet reached a decision as to the ultimate disposition of this collection, as he is empowered to do by his father's will, and it is to be inferred that he does not intend to do so until after the temporary exhibition of which he speaks shall have been inaugurated. It is gratifying to know, however, that for a time at least the collection will not be broken up or divided and that the people of New York will be given ample opportunity to see and enjoy the most famous collection of works of art that has been brought together in our generation, remarkable alike for the wealth of important objects which it includes and the wide range of interest covered by them. The opportunity will be one which even the collector himself never enjoyed, for he never saw all these treasures in one place or at one time.

The cases containing these objects are still corded and sealed in the Museum, with the exception of those that contained the paintings now on exhibition. It is therefore impossible to give at present an accurate account of the collection from direct examination, but to gratify the widespread interest in the subject the following summary has been compiled from the lists accompanying the various shipments. Roughly speaking, these lists show a total of about 4100 objects, ranging in size from miniatures to large tapestries, which have been assembled from five places — Mr. Morgan's London residence at Prince's Gate, his country home, Dover House, the Victoria and Albert Museum at South Kensington, the National Gallery (in which the large Raphael was

formerly exhibited), and Paris, where many things were stored awaiting his final orders.

These objects may be divided into the following main groups: enamels, including the snuff-boxes and other small enameled *objets d'art* of the eighteenth century, classical bronzes and jewelry, bronzes of the Gothic and Renaissance periods, silver, metalwork, watches and clocks, jewels, crystals and objects in amber, Italian majolica, early French faience, French and German porcelains, Chinese porcelains, Venetian glass, tapestries, furniture, ivories, small carvings in boxwood and honeystone, sculptures, miniatures, and paintings.

With the exception of the miniatures, the enamels constitute the largest section of the collection. Among them the Swenigorodskoi Collection is the most extraordinary gathering of Byzantine enamels ever brought together. When purchased by Mr. Morgan it consisted of 43 pieces, two of which he gave to the Louvre several years ago, and the gift was regarded as of such importance that he received special honors from the French government in recognition of it. The others are all included among the treasures now deposited in our Museum. In addition to these there are about 375 enamels, ranging in date from the earliest times through the seventeenth century, and including the wonderful Hoentschel Collection of mediaeval examples, which was purchased by Mr. Morgan two years ago. Eighteenth century enamels are represented by the collection of snuff-boxes, *étuis*, and other small objects. Of these about 150 are French and between 80 and 90 English, including a fine collection of Battersea enamels. Together with these may be mentioned the *cartes de bal* and *porte tablettes* in enamel, ivory, Vernis Martin, etc., of the eighteenth century, numbering 155 pieces.

The remarkable collection of bronzes, statuettes for the most part, and principally of the Italian Renaissance period, numbers about 260 pieces.

Including some fine examples of ancient jewelry and miscellaneous objects in gold

and silver, the collection of classical material, principally bronzes, numbers about 140 pieces.

Of objects in silver there are approximately 150. A large proportion of these are German of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, but there are also fine examples of the earlier periods.

A class of material which may be designated broadly as metalwork, including reliquaries, candlesticks, ewers, and other objects in bronze and iron, comprises about 50 objects.

The collection of watches and clocks includes about 260 specimens, and derives special importance from the number of early timepieces which it contains.

Another class of material may be described as jewelry and objects in crystal and amber. This numbers about 140 pieces, of which a large proportion belong to the Renaissance period.

Under the heading of ceramics may be grouped a collection of 120 or more pieces of Italian majolica of the sixteenth century, some 16 pieces of French faïence of the sixteenth century, a collection of French porcelains of the eighteenth century numbering about 350 pieces, about 330 specimens of Dresden porcelain of the eighteenth century, a collection of 44 scent bottles in Chelsea porcelain, English, eighteenth century, and 17 Chinese porcelains of the seventeenth century. Under this heading may also be noted the collection of glass, which consists of several examples of Arabic glass of the fourteenth century and 43 of Venetian glass dating from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Of large tapestries there are 39, ranging in date from the Gothic period to the latter part of the eighteenth century, and including superb examples from Knole Park, the Dolfuss, Kann, and other collections. In connection with these should be mentioned the French eighteenth-century furniture upholstered with Beauvais and other tapestries, of which there are two sets, one consisting of two sofas and twelve chairs, the other of three sofas and eight chairs. There are also two tapestry screens, three pairs of Aubusson portières, and five antique Persian rugs; and besides

the furniture just referred to there are thirty or more fine examples of French eighteenth-century work, including several which are decorated with Sèvres plaques, and a few of the Gothic and Baroque periods.

The ivories constitute one of the most important features of the collection, and one of those to which it owes its high reputation for the quality and rarity of its specimens. There are about 225 in all, of various schools and epochs, the mediaeval series being probably unsurpassed in any other collection.

The small carvings in boxwood and honeystone, medallions and reliefs, for the most part German of the sixteenth century, number about 45 pieces.

There are 27 pieces of Italian sculpture, for the most part of the Renaissance period, including several works by the della Robbias. The examples of French sculpture number about 50, and date from the Renaissance period through the eighteenth century, including, in this last division, beautiful and famous pieces by Clodion, Falconet, and Houdon. There are also examples of Netherlandish and German sculpture, and two small figures of the classical period.

Mr. Morgan's printed catalogue of his miniatures includes 844 items, but the collection was considerably increased after the publication of the catalogue, and today numbers nearly 900 specimens. This will undoubtedly be one of the most popular elements of the exhibition, not only on account of the beauty of the miniatures, but also because of the number of interesting historical portraits among them.

Finally there are the paintings, with most of which visitors to the Museum are already familiar. Those which are now being shown in the Gallery of Special Exhibitions will be transferred to the galleries containing the rest of the collection, and in addition to them the 14 decorations painted by Fragonard for Madame du Barry, and rejected by that lady, will be shown.

The above summary, imperfect as it is will at least serve to show what an un-

paralleled service Mr. Morgan rendered to his country by bringing to it the wealth of artistic material which has been enumerated, and what a great event the exhibition of such a collection will be. It is too early yet to fix a date for the opening of the exhibition, but we hope to be ready in January.

For the exhibition of the Morgan Collection, practically the entire upper floor of the new addition of the Museum building at the northeast corner will be set aside, and plans which had previously been made for its occupancy will be deferred, the only exception being a small room adjoining the older building, which has been reserved for the portion of the Moore Collection now temporarily retired. About 20,000 square feet of floor space will thus be assigned to the exhibition, with a corresponding amount of wall space, in a series of splendidly lighted halls and galleries; and the public may be assured that the staff of the Museum will unite in making every effort to have the setting of the collection worthy of its great importance and its arrangement such as will bring out as effectively as possible the qualities of the various classes of material which it embraces. The plans that have been developed thus far to this end are purely tentative in character, and liable to constant change as the work proceeds. We are therefore not in a position to give any account at present of the proposed method of installation, though one point which will be of interest may be touched upon. It was the late Mr. Morgan's wish — indeed he made it a condition — that if he sent the famous Fragonard panels to the Museum, they should be placed in a setting like that in which they hung at Prince's Gate, and this will be done. The Prince's Gate room will be reproduced as accurately as it can be, the original paneling, cornices, and doors being used for the purpose, thanks to the generous coöperation of his son, and thus not only will the panels themselves be displayed in a most attractive manner, but the Museum will have, in this room, an added memorial of the great collector.

E. R.

## THE ARMOR OF SIR JAMES SCUDAMORE

THE Museum added to its collection in 1911 two incomplete suits of Elizabethan armor, decorated in bands engraved and partly gilded, which came from an English manor-house, Holme Lacy, in Herefordshire. This was the ancient seat of the family of Scudamore-Stanhope, now represented by the Earl of Chesterfield, and here the armor had remained since the time when it was borne by Sir James Scudamore. Sir James, it may be mentioned, was well known in his day as gentleman usher at the Court of Elizabeth, and a personage of sufficient prominence to warrant Spenser's referring to him in the *Faerie Queene*. He was a man of means and we may safely assume that his panoply for tournaments and court ceremonies was prepared by the best artist-armors. He is pictured in one of the suits in a full-length portrait in the possession of the present Lord Chesterfield (Fig. 3), and he appears in the second suit under the name of Mr. Skidmuer, in a contemporary colored drawing (Fig. 4), in the celebrated armorers' pattern-book — believed on weighty grounds to have belonged to the royal armory of Greenwich — now preserved in South Kensington Museum.

It is rare in these days to discover armor which belonged to definite personages, hence it may not be out of place to review as best we may the history of the present pieces. Probable it is that they never strayed far from the home of their owner. They may originally have been mounted on racks or manikins after the prevailing fashion and dismembered when Holme Lacy was remodeled, toward the end of the seventeenth century, at which time probably some of the most decorative pieces were hung about the house. In fact, we know that they were displayed separately, for when the armor was examined old wires were found in place by means of which pieces had been attached to pegs or brackets. Later on, the pieces were taken down, some were lost, the rest stored and